

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of producing a catalyst ~~for use in the production of methacrylic acid~~, having a composition of the following formula (1), wherein said catalyst is useful for production of methacrylic acid ~~comprising~~, by subjecting methacrolein to vapor phase catalytic oxidization with molecular oxygen,

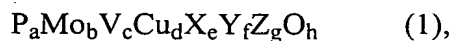
said method comprising wherein, ~~when~~ mixing

100 parts by mass of a solution or a slurry (liquid A), containing molybdenum atoms, phosphorous atoms and vanadium atoms, in which the content of ammonium species is 0 to 1.5 mol relative to 12 mol of the molybdenum atoms,

5 to 300 parts by mass of a solution or a slurry (liquid B), containing 6 to 17 mol of ammonium species relative to 12 mol of the molybdenum atoms contained in the solution A, and

a solution or a slurry (liquid C), containing an element Z,

wherein the liquid B is mixed with the liquid A, the liquid C or a mixture of the liquid A and the liquid C over a period of 0.1 to 15 minutes:



wherein P, Mo, V, Cu and O represent phosphorous, molybdenum, vanadium, copper and oxygen, respectively; X represents at least one element selected from the group consisting of antimony, bismuth, arsenic, germanium, zirconium, tellurium, silver, selenium, silicon, tungsten and boron; Y represents at least one element selected from the group consisting of iron, zinc, chromium, magnesium, tantalum, cobalt, manganese, barium, ~~garium~~ gallium, cerium and lanthanum; Z represents at least one element selected from the group consisting of potassium, rubidium and cesium; a, b, c, d, e, f, g and h represent an atomic ratio of each

element, and when $b=12$, $a=0.5$ to 3 , $c=0.01$ to 3 , $d=0.01$ to 2 , $e=0$ to 3 , $f=0$ to 3 and $g=0.01$ to 3 , and h represents an atomic ratio of oxygen necessary for satisfying the valence of each of the above-mentioned components.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein 5 to 100 parts by mass of the liquid C is mixed with the liquid A, ~~the liquid B~~ or a mixture of the liquid A and the liquid B over 0.1 to 30 minutes.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the liquid B is a solution or a slurry which contains substantially no phosphorous, molybdenum, vanadium, copper, element X, element Y or element Z.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the liquid C is a solution or a slurry which contains substantially no phosphorous, molybdenum, vanadium, copper, element X, element Y or ammonium species.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): A catalyst for use in the production of methacrylic acid, which is produced by the method claimed in claim 1.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): A method of producing methacrylic acid, comprising, subjecting methacrolein to vapor phase catalytic oxidization with molecular oxygen in the presence of the catalyst for producing methacrylic acid as claimed in claim 5.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 2, wherein the liquid B is a solution or a slurry which contains substantially no phosphorous, molybdenum, vanadium, copper, element X, element Y or element Z.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 2, wherein the liquid C is a solution or a slurry which contains substantially no phosphorous, molybdenum, vanadium, copper, element X, element Y or ammonium species.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 3, wherein the liquid C is a solution or a slurry which contains substantially no phosphorous, molybdenum, vanadium, copper, element X, element Y or ammonium species.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): A catalyst for use in the production of methacrylic acid, which is produced by the method claimed in claim 2.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): A catalyst for use in the production of methacrylic acid, which is produced by the method claimed in claim 3.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): A catalyst for use in the production of methacrylic acid, which is produced by the method claimed in claim 4.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): A method of producing methacrylic acid, comprising, subjecting methacrolein to vapor phase catalytic oxidization with molecular oxygen in the presence of the catalyst for producing methacrylic acid as claimed in claim 10.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): A method of producing methacrylic acid, comprising, subjecting methacrolein to vapor phase catalytic oxidization with molecular oxygen in the presence of the catalyst for producing methacrylic acid as claimed in claim 11.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): A method of producing methacrylic acid, comprising, subjecting methacrolein to vapor phase catalytic oxidization with molecular oxygen in the presence of the catalyst for producing methacrylic acid as claimed in claim 12.

DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENT

Claim 1 has been amended by inserting the transitional phrase --comprising-- with regard to the actual method claimed, and by rearranging the claim for purposes of clarification only. In addition, the spelling of --gallium-- has been corrected. Claim 2 has been amended by deleting "the liquid B".

No new matter is believed to have been added by the above amendment. Claims 1-15 remain pending in the application.